



Louisville Metro Tree Advisory Commission

Tuesday, November 25, 2014 at 5:00 p.m.

Air Pollution Control District Boardroom

Meeting Minutes

I. Welcome and Announcements – Katy Schneider, Co-Chair

The following Louisville Metro Tree Advisory Commission (hereinafter, “Commission” or “LMTAC”) members were present: Henry Heuser (Co-Chair), Katy Schneider (Co-Chair), Allen Steinbock (Secretary/Treasurer), Nelson Maynard, Claude Stephens, Amy Johnson, Betsy Ruhe, Todd Eberle, Robert Eberenz, Jr., Cadell Walker, and Kenya Wade, as well as ex-officio Commissioners Mesude Duyar, Sherie’ Long, and Michelle King.

Co-Chair Katy Schneider brought the meeting to order at 5:03pm.

Co-Chair Henry Heuser and Katy announced that the father of Maria Koetter, Commissioner (Office of Sustainability), passed away last week. Her family is asking for donations to go to the Olmsted Conservancy in place of flowers. Andrea Webster will send Maria’s contact information to Henry and Katy.

II. Approval of Minutes – Henry Heuser, Co-Chair

Co-Chair Henry Heuser asked for and received unanimous approval of the minutes from last meeting.

III. Old Business

a. Update from Office of Sustainability – Andrea Webster, Project Coordinator

Andrea Webster gave the report on Maria’s behalf. She reported that trees will be included in the STAR Communities Assessment, which is currently underway by the Office of Sustainability in partnership with the Louisville Sustainability Council. We are submitted many of our tree initiatives for the STAR “innovation” credit. STAR Communities is a transparent, national rating system which, through data collection, will give Louisville a way to measure sustainability progress and highlight where we are doing well and where we can do more.

Henry asked about the publicity for the Tree Canopy Assessment. Gina O’Brien, Executive Director of Brightside who is working with the Office of Sustainability on the Tree Canopy Assessment, said they are working on a plan to announce the results in January. The Tree Canopy Assessment review team is currently reviewing the data. Katy suggested that the LMTAC be involved in the conversation about the press conference since they helped fund it.

b. Update from Urban Forestry Coordinator – Andrea Webster

Andrea gave the report on behalf of Erin Thompson, Urban Forestry Coordinator. She reported that Erin is working on a lot of fall tree plantings. Erin encourages everyone to report their plantings on the Louisville Tree Tracker. Groups with a large quantity of tree plantings to report can email their numbers to Erin, instead of logging them in the Tree Tracker.

Mesude Duyar, Ex-officio Commissioner (Metro Parks), reported that they had a 97% survival rate from last year's plantings. They surpassed their goal of 95%. Last year, they planted 1,300 trees. This year, they will target around 1,000 trees. All of the trees have been purchased. They started planting in November. So far, they have planted 160 trees.

c. Tree Action Team/Community Campaign Update – Claude Stevens

Commissioner Claude Stephens reported that the Louisville Sustainability Council (LSC) Tree Action Team agreed on a graphic to represent all of the tree organizations. There is a list of 15 or 20 taglines that go with it that need to be legally vetted. The image will serve as an identity for all Louisville tree organizations.

Henry reported that Mike Hayman, Claude and Katy met with Donna Hargens, the Superintendent of Schools, and the Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) COO. They wanted to convince them to stop mowing grass on the larger, unused areas of school campuses in order to promote tree regeneration. Claude urged them to engage their mowing contractors. Mike said Tom Aberly (principal at Atherton High School) has already picked 15 sites to consider. Ex-officio Commissioner (APCD) Michelle King reported the Mike Mulheirn, JCPS Director of Facilities and Environmental Services, reported that they are already identifying no-mow areas on several campuses. Henry reported that the conversation did expand to turning schools into arboretums. Claude said the strategy is to identify a small handful of campuses and get those areas working as no-mow areas. Commissioner Betsy Ruhe suggested Union Trail as one of the pilot schools because it already has trouble mowing its wetland. Katy added that this is a large opportunity to impact the tree canopy.

d. Chapter 10 Recommended Revisions Update – Katy Schneider

Katy reported that proposed tree changes to the Land Development Code (LDC) were on the Planning Commission agenda earlier this month. Katy was the only person to speak. They postponed the vote to another meeting. They are having lawyers look into the fee in-lieu. At the meeting, Katy emphasized to the Planning Commission how difficult it is to get people to keep showing up when we keep getting pushed off the agenda. The next meeting is December 4, 2014. The next step is to gear up for Metro Council, says Katy.

IV. New Business

a. Report on 2014 Partners in Community Forestry Conference – Henry Heuser, Jr.

Henry passed around the notes that Katy and Henry took during the Partners in Community Forestry Conference (Attachment A). He said the first thing the LMTAC did was ask for an Urban Forester to report to the planning department in Louisville Metro. Henry went through his notes on the handout regarding what Charlotte, NC, is doing to increase their tree canopy. In Charlotte, all of the tree efforts are coordinated. Katy and Henry attended a tree planting in Charlotte.

Katy added that most communities have one tree-focused 501(c)3 that works very closely with the city. Mesude added that, in Charlotte, they have an entire department focused on trees. Henry said they have something like 17 full-time designers for gardens and arboretums. Commissioner Sherie' Long said that in Louisville, we lack pride in our tree canopy. Katy said Charlotte's goal is to have 50% coverage by 2050, which is in their tree ordinance. Henry noted that Raleigh, NC, has stronger

parking lot regulations. There is a website in Attachment A that explains how to install a parking lot without cutting down all of the trees or losing any parking spaces.

The next conference will be in November 2015 in Denver. Katy said she was able to get a partial scholarship to go this year. She doesn't plan on going again, but she would like to send other representatives.

An audience member asked who the single voice would be in Louisville. Henry said it would need to be the Mayor. The audience member clarified that he was asking which organization would serve as the single voice. Katy said she thinks we need to start a new tree organization that focuses solely on trees.

Commissioner Nelson Maynard asked about Claude's marketing plan. Claude said the LSC has really come into being in the last year, but they are multi-focused. They are an aggregator group, but there could be a group that sits under the LSC that could play a marketing role. Katy suggested that we have a nonprofit that can accept outside funding. Claude suggested that a fund and a group be set up under the LSC. Gina said that's what we did with the Tree Fund and that didn't solve anything. Katy said the group has to work closely with the city. Claude said he would like to talk to someone in Charlotte to see how they got to where they are – with one organization that oversees all tree issues. An audience member suggested Mike's Trees Inc. nonprofit, which existed many years ago. Katy said they thought about resurrecting Trees Inc. Claude said it's possible to resurrect it, legally. Katy said she doesn't think it needs to be under an umbrella organization. Katy said cities like Indianapolis took Keep Indianapolis Beautiful (their Brightside-like organization) and focused them totally on trees.

V. Committee Reports

a. Policy Committee / Tree Ordinance – Todd Eberle

Commissioner Todd Eberle reported that the Policy Committee is moving through the ordinance. They have completed nine sections and a portion of the definitions section. They are meeting next week, and will likely have nine more sections completed. They looked at policies in Charlotte. Their goal is to come up with an ideal model ordinance and pass as much of it as they can. They are working on spacing, tree maintenance and protection, and the creation of a department of forestry. Todd said, on the public side, this would be the umbrella agency. They would like to see the LMTAC as an ordinance rather than an executive order.

Katy commended Todd for all of his work. She said he brings examples from many other cities to the meetings. Katy said we would not have made any progress without him.

Todd said the committee's goal is to have one of the better conceived ordinance proposals. They are trying to avoid getting bogged down in details within the proposal.

Katy said we need a tree campaign so badly in order to sell the ordinance politically. We need to help people understand the importance of trees.

Henry asked how the ordinance would address massive tree destruction, like what is happening with FedEx in Louisville. Todd said it would be under the purview of the Land Development Code. Katy said she would like to see FedEx compensate for tree replacement. Henry suggested that someone write a letter to the editor saying that they are happy about the 1000 new jobs brought in by FedEx, but we need to mitigate for tree loss as a result of the new building construction.

b. Community Projects Update

Mike Hayman reported that they are planting 40 more trees at Atherton High School since they have a committed principal. He wants to make Atherton the city's first school arboretum. Louisville Nursery is donating the plantings. They are going to donate two plantings per year. Claude and Mike have been working with the school to get the arboretum into their curriculum.

Sherie' said Wheeler Elementary had an established arboretum that was neglected. The Extension service wanted to do some corrective maintenance. Last year, they created a new project.

Henry asked if we could get some publicity for the Louisville Nursery Group. They did get coverage in the article that covered the Metro Hall parking lot planting.

Erica Peterson is doing a free-lance story through Politico. Henry asked Audience member Jim Bruggers to explain what Politico is. Jim said it is a national news organization based out of the Washington, D.C., area.

Henry asked Jim Bruggers to tell about his latest story. Jim announced that he is writing an article on the Asian long-horned beetle (ALB). Once the ALB moves into the area, the USDA will cut down every at-risk tree.

Henry announced that Dan Taffle, who talked about the City of Rolling Fields to the LMTAC a few months ago, asked for support. The Kentucky State Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) is requiring him to cut down all of his trees. The District Engineer is Matt Bullick. Sherie' said this issue comes up in regards to roads because they consider anything in the right of way to be a hazard. Todd said the same issue came up in Prospect. KYTC wanted Prospect to take out ½ of a park they had established. Their escape route was that KYTC didn't have enough money to widen the road, so they weren't required to remove the trees. Todd suggested making road diet suggestions to slow down roads rather than widen roads, which speeds road up, making them less safe. Sherie' said you have to go to the top at the KYTC. It needs to be someone who has some clout to go to the top. Todd suggested the state senator or representative.

Commissioner Cadell Walker reported that The Nature Conservancy has 64 people apply for the Director of Conservation. They will hold the first round of interviews on December 2nd.

An audience member from the Highlands announced that he has gotten a lot of news coverage about tree plantings. Deer Park, which has the lowest number of trees of any Highlands neighborhood, is going to ask Love Louisville Trees for a planting event in all District 8 neighborhoods. Henry suggested asking the Tyler Park Neighborhood Association to work on Baxter Avenue's empty tree wells.

An audience member asked if Old Louisville had a neighborhood organization. Herb Fink is the chairman of the project improvement committee.

VI. Adjourn

The next meeting is January 27, 2014, 5:00pm, at 5:00pm in the Louisville Metro Air Pollution Control District Boardroom.

Meeting adjourned at 6:14pm.

[Attachment B was not discussed at the meeting, but was provided by Secretary/Treasurer Allen Steinbock as an update on the balance of funds in The Louisville Tree Fund. The balance as of 10/31/2014 was \$12,127.26.]